

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3002
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: NEW FERMENT IN THE DMC

1. UNREST IN THE DMC HAS ONCE AGAIN REACHED A CRITICAL LEVEL DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS, MORE OR LESS COINCIDING WITH THE BLOSSOMING OF THE PEACE NOW MOVEMENT. THE PRIMARY DEVISIVE ISSUE IN THE PARTY IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. IN FACT, PEACE NOW HAS DRAWN MUCH SUPPORT AND A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF ITS LEADERSHIP FROM PRESENT AND PAST MEMBERS OF THE DMC. MANY DMC ACTIVISTS ARE APPALLED AT THE CONTRADICTION OF DMC PRINCIPLES INHERENT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE WEST BANK AND ITS SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THEY HAVE TURNED TO PEACE NOW TO REGISTER THE DISCONTENT AND OPPOSITION

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WHICH THEY FEEL THEIR PARTY HAS FAILED TO EXPRESS.

2. DISSATISFACTION IS BEING TRANSLATED INTO RENEWED DEMANDS THAT THE PARTY QUIT THE COALITION. SOME TEN DAYS AGO HAARETZ CARRIED AN AD SIGNED BY 300 "DMC VOTERS" CALLING ON DMC HEAD YIGAEEL YADIN TO STAND UP FOR THE PARTY'S PLATFORM. TODAY'S YEDIOT AHARANOT HAS A FULL PAGE AD BEARING

THE NAMES OF 650 DMC MEMBERS WHICH DEMANDS THAT YADIN EITHER CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT'S PEACE POLICY OR LEAD HIS PARTY INTO OPPOSITION. DMC DISSENTERS ARE TO MEET TONIGHT IN AN EFFORT TO IMPRESS PARTY LEADERSHIP WITH THE EXTENT OF DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE PARTY. THE ORGANIZERS, THEMSELVES AMONG THE FIRST AND SECOND RANK OF DMC LEADERS, ARE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT 40 PERCENT OF THE DMC COUNCIL NOW SUPPORT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COALITION.

3. OVERLAPPING WITH THE AGITATION FOR BOLTING FROM THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS THE LONG STANDING DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DMC'S LEADERSHIP. CRITICISM IS DIRECTED PARTICULARLY AGAINST YADIN AND COMES FROM SOME "LOYALISTS" AS WELL AS VIRTUALLY FROM ALL WHO WANT THE PARTY TO GO INTO OPPOSITION. YADIN'S FAILURE TO PROVIDE DIRECTION AND COHERENCE WITHIN THE PARTY AND HIS WEAK INFLUENCE IN THE CABINET ARE MAJOR POINTS OF CRITICISM. IN ADDITION TO THE PEACE ISSUE THE DISSENTERS POINT TO THE FAILURE OF THE DMC TO EFFECT ANY OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS DEMANDED IN THE PARTY'S PLATFORM.

4. COMMENT: AS WITH THE AGITATION LAST WINTER THAT ALMOST LED TO THE SPLIT IN THE PARTY, (SEE TEL AVIV 1227) THE CORE OF THE DISSENT IS THE DOVISH SHINUI FACTION. THERE ARE, HOWEVER

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INTERESTING DIFFERENCES. THE EARLIER FERMENT WAS ESSENTIALLY OVER LEADERSHIP, AIMED PARTICULARLY AT PERSONALITIES AND WAS LED BY SHINUI'S CHIEF, MK AMNON RUBINSTEIN. AT THAT TIME THE REBELS ADMITTED THEY WERE A MINORITY AND WERE THREATENING TO SPLIT FROM THE PARTY. THE DISSENT WAS APPEASED BY A RESHUFFLING OF POSTS IN THE PARTY ORGANS WHICH BROUGHT RUBINSTEIN INTO A POSITION OF GREATER PROMINENCE AND AUTHORITY IN THE PARTY COUNCIL. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, RUBINSTEIN IS CONSPICUOUS BY HIS ABSENCE FROM THE RANKS OF THE DISSENTERS (ONLY PARTLY EXPLAINED BY HIS CURRENT VISIT TO THE U.S.) IN DEED, HE HAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED HIS OPPOSITION TO QUITTING THE GOVERNMENT. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE CURRENT REBELS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF PERSUADING A MAJORITY OF THE PARTY TO BOLT THE COALITION, AND, ACCORDING TO MORDECHAI WIRSHUBSKI, ONE OF THE KEY VOICES IN THE DISSATISFACTION, BELIEVE THAT EVENTUALLY THEY CAN TAKE THE ENTIRE PAR

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TY WITH THEM. IT IS THE DMC ESTABLISHMENT, I.E.ITS MINISTERS, WHO ARE BEGINNING TO TALK IN TERMS OF "WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT THE TROUBLEMAKERS." WIRSHUBSKI IS REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT ENOUGH DMC COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL BECOME DISSILLUSIONED WITH BEGIN'S POLICIES OVER THE NEXT TWO TO FOUR MONTHS TO BRING ABOUT THE DMC'S WITHDRAWAL

FORM THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAYS THAT FOLLOWING SUCH A STEP
EITHER IN GOVERNMENT OR IN POLICY WOULD BECOME A STRONG LIKELIHOOD.

5. AS ONE WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED THE DMC'S MEMBERSHIP
IN THE COALITION (HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW WHO NOTED AGAINST
JOINING), WIRBHUBSKI'S VIEWS BETRAYS A CERTAIN BIAS. NONE-
THELESS, YADIN AND HIS THREE DMC COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET
APPEAR INCREASINGLY ON THE DEFENSIVE IN THE FACE OF THESE ATTACKS
AND THE PARTY'S INTERNAL CRISIS SEEMS HEADED FOR A POSSIBLE
SHOWDOWN IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.
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